

Appendix 2

Technical Notes

- Data collected in certain instances may have a small sample size or may contain rates or percentages with a small numerator. Caution is recommended when interpreting rates based on small numbers. (Buescher, P. Statistical Primer; April 1997; N.C. DHHS, State Center for Health Statistics)
- The State Center for Health Statistics frequently releases data by race for only two groups – “white” and “minority.” Many obstacles hamper efforts to obtain accurate health measures for specific minority populations. Smaller minority populations within a geographic sector often result in very small sample sizes. A small number of health events in the numerator of a rate leads to unstable rates, a situation encountered for the smaller minority groups. Base data for the denominator comes from census data, which is not collected every year.
- Rates and percentages are not considered statistically reliable if the numerator or sample size is less than 20 (Racial and Ethnic Differences in Health in North Carolina: 2004 Update; N.C. DHHS: May 2004).